

To: Enck, Judith[Enck.Judith@epa.gov]
From: Soltani, Beth
Sent: Wed 8/31/2016 7:47:44 PM
Subject: State lambastes

NEW YORK:

State lambastes EPA over shifting chemical stance

Published: Wednesday, August 31, 2016

State lawmakers in New York assailed U.S. EPA at a hearing yesterday, accusing the federal agency of changing its guidance on perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, in water.

At issue is a pollution case at Hoosick Falls, N.Y., where municipal water and private well water tested above 400 parts per trillion of PFOA.

In 2009, EPA ruled water off-limits if levels of PFOA exceeded 400 ppt.

The agency, however, maintained that Hoosick Falls water was safe until an about-face in December 2015, in which it recommended that residents not use municipal water.

PFOA is linked to kidney cancer and other ailments.

Advertisement

Lawmakers expressed frustration and confusion at EPA's recommendations.

"They come from basically left field in December of 2015 ... and they say, 'Don't drink the water,'" said Howard Zucker, New York state health commissioner. "They then in May of 2016 put out their new health advisory of 70 ppt. But even in that advisory, they don't say, 'If you're above 70 [ppt], don't drink the water.' ... So what confused us is they didn't mention, 'Don't drink the water ... above a certain level,' and do now."

For years, Saint-Gobain SA, a French construction and chemicals firm, manufactured PFOA at a plant in Hoosick Falls. In January 2016, New York placed the factory on its state Superfund list.

Honeywell International Inc. is also implicated in the pollution.

Some residents have alleged that the water pollution has led to cancers in the area.

"When I first learned of the exceedance, we had multiple conversations [in 2015] with the state Health Department where they made a judgment not to follow the existing number of 400 ppt," said EPA Region 2 Administrator Judith Enck. "They said [at the hearing] there was a built-in margin of safety and they didn't need to follow it. ... The health department wasn't confused, they just simply disagreed" (Hamilton/Seiler, Albany Times-Union, Aug. 31). — GD